

## ***Oak wilt confirmed in three northern counties***

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Oak wilt was confirmed for the first time this summer in Lincoln, Sawyer, and Vilas counties. Confirmed trees were located north of Tomahawk in Lincoln County, south of Hayward in Sawyer County, and east of Eagle River in Vilas County. All three locations were in yards and all three properties had oaks pruned or damaged in late spring.

Oak wilt is commonly found in the southern two-thirds of the state, but has been creeping north. Oak wilt has been confirmed in all Wisconsin counties except Ashland, Bayfield, Calumet, Door, Douglas, Forest, Iron, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Price, Rusk, Sheboygan, Taylor, and Washburn.

Oak wilt affects trees in both the red and white oak groups. However, the red oak group, including northern red, northern pin, and black oaks, are particularly vulnerable to oak wilt. Once symptoms become visible, a tree loses most of its leaves (typically from the top downward) and dies very quickly, often within a few weeks. Once a tree is infected with oak wilt, water and nutrients can't move up from the root system, causing the tree's leaves to wilt and fall. The first symptoms of oak wilt are branches with wilted leaves and leaves on the ground in summer when you wouldn't expect to see that. These are not the brown, dry leaves of autumn. These are partially green to bronze-green and are not completely dry.

Anyone with an oak tree that is rapidly losing its leaves may want to have the tree examined for oak wilt by an International Society of Arboriculture-certified arborist or forester or send in a sample for a laboratory test. Immediate steps should be taken to protect nearby oaks if they value those trees. The University of Wisconsin's Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic can help verify the presence of oak wilt. A sample must be sent to the clinic, and a small fee is charged for the service. The clinic can be reached at (608) 262-2863, or at [www.plantpath.wisc.edu/pddc](http://www.plantpath.wisc.edu/pddc) (exit DNR).

Wisconsin communities may be eligible to participate in a cost-sharing program to help combat oak wilt. The Urban Forestry Grant Program is not available to individual property owners. But property owners with oak wilt are encouraged to contact their municipal forester or other local official to pursue a grant. Applications for the program are due by Oct. 1. If a community is interested in applying for a grant, contact the local Wisconsin DNR [Urban Forestry coordinator](#).

Additional information about oak wilt and other forest health issues can be found online using the keyword "[oak wilt](#)" at [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov).